Playing the Immigration Card? Extreme Right-Wing Party Strategy during the 2008-2013 Economic Crisis in Europe

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ABSTRACT:

In this paper I examine how electorally successful extreme right-wing parties across Europe place emphasis on issue salience such as immigration which have electoral implications during economic downturns, specifically in the context of the 2008-2013 Great Recession. Drawing on original data, empirical evidence suggests that extreme right-wing parties capitalized on the issue salience of immigration and used the immigration card as a party strategy in order to increase their electoral vote share during the economic crisis. This paper argues that electorally successful extreme right-wing parties framed the economic crisis in socio-cultural terms, in appealing to the threat of immigration and linking the Eurozone crisis that hit European Union member states to their core ideological features of nativism, authoritarianism and populism. In this paper I also find preliminary evidence for evolving party competition dynamics between extreme right-wing and center right parties, specifically in how both party families appear to have benefited electorally from emphasizing immigration salience in the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis. Therefore, the 2008-2013 economic crisis has rewarded issue clarity, with center and extreme right-wing parties performing better when making salient issues on socio-cultural issues such as immigration, irrespective of national context. I argue that these findings have implications for the trajectory of contemporary liberal democracy in Europe, with the electoral threat posed by center right and extreme right-wing parties, in emphasizing the socio-cultural dimension on the immigration issue which acts as a successful party strategy during times of economic crisis.[2]

Keywords: Extreme Right-Wing Parties, Economic Crisis, Immigration Salience, Party Competition, European Politics

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INTRODUCTION

Conventional wisdom has often highlighted how economic crises facilitate a rise in electoral support for the extreme right at the ballot box. This theory is often referred to as the economics breeds extremism theory in the literature (Mudde, 2013; Fukuyama, 2012; The Economist, 2012). This paper challenges this received wisdom and argues that the economics breeds extremism theory has two major conceptual and empirical shortcomings. The first shortcoming concerns operationalization. A number of empirical studies have examined the impact of macroeconomic conditions (Jackman et al 1996; Knigge 1998; Lubbers et al 2002; Golder 2003; Arzheimer 2009; Werts et al 2013). These studies have tended to operationalize ethnic competition and protest vote theories, instead of the economics breeds extremism theory. It is often the case that the economics breeds extremism theory is seen as a subset of these two theoretical frameworks which primarily focus on the anti-immigrant ideology of extreme right-wing parties and their supporters, alongside the anti-political establishment capacity of the extreme right.

These theoretical frameworks however say little about economic factors or the role that economic crises play in driving electoral support for the extreme right. Conceivably, it is posited that economic downturns may lead voters to question the vitality of governing mainstream political parties and activate voters to vote for the extreme right in Europe (Norris, 2005; Ellinas, 2013; Stockemer, 2013). However, it is not clear what mechanisms would lead voters to cast a vote for the extreme right during periods of economic downturns in the political science literature.

A second fundamental problem of the economics breeds extremism theory is an empirical shortcoming. Historically, the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany has been attributed to the economic turbulence that took place as a consequence of the Great Depression (Mian et al,

2010; Giuliano and Spilimbergo, 2009). Empirical evidence has shown that this is a misconception and that the rise of the Nazi Party was due to a combination of political and institutional factors (King et al, 2008). Recently, two notable cases have given rise to the economics breeds extremism theory in both the media and in section of academic research. The electoral rise of Golden Dawn in Greece and the National Front in France has been attributed to the onset of the financial crisis and subsequent austerity in the Eurozone, with higher levels of unemployment, inflation rates and contraction of gross domestic product (The Economist, 2012; Stockemer, 2013; Rydgren, 2011). Therefore, the economics breeds extremism theory has clear operational and empirical shortcomings, with no clear relationship being shown at the comparative level. Recent evidence has also cast further empirical shortcomings on the economics breeds extremism theory, with countries such as Ireland, Spain and Portugal which have been hit worst by the economic crisis not experiencing a systematic electoral increase in extreme right-wing support.

Previous research has shown that in the context of rising levels of migration, extreme right-wing parties benefit electorally by placing issue salience on nationalism. Therefore, the economic crisis has arguably rewarded issue clarity, offering parties across the political spectrum electoral opportunities when they make salient issues that connect with specific national contexts (Loveless, Whitefield, and Downes, 2015). Building on this empirical finding, the central research question of this paper seeks to investigate how extreme right-wing parties responded to the 2008-2013 economic crisis and which electorally successful party strategies they adopted and why. This paper draws on a novel dataset, in examining the change in party performance through completed elections in Europe (between 2005-2012) alongside party position data for 190 parties (2007/2008) that has been merged with available data on party characteristics and country conditions. This paper finds that incumbent governing parties suffered the most electorally from the 2008-2013 economic crisis and their electoral vote share

decreased substantially, with voters assigning blame to them for declining macroeconomic conditions. The central empirical evidence in this paper suggests that extreme right-wing parties capitalized on the issue salience of immigration and used the immigration card as a party strategy to increase their electoral vote share during the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis. The empirical findings also show a similar empirical relationship for center right parties across Europe in the context of the economic crisis. Therefore a similar mechanism of issue clarity and salience appears to be at work, with electorally successful center and extreme right-wing parties performing better when making salient issues on socio-cultural issues such as immigration, irrespective of declining national contextual variables.

THE 2008-2013 GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

In autumn 2008, national economies were hit hard by the financial and economic crisis. The economic slowdown began in Europe in the second quarter of 2008. Europe experienced the sharpest contraction in the first quarter of 2009. The origins of the global financial crisis or Great Recession as it has come to be known can be seen in the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy which occurred on the 15th September 2008 and continued into 2009. Figures 1 and 2 below outline the widespread economic shocks, through the substantial increases in the Volatility Index and the JP Morgan Emerging Bond Index (EMBI). Figure 2 also shows how the Fed Broad Trade weighted Dollar has continued to decrease drastically after September 15th, 2008. The economists Frankel and Saravelos (2012) identified the end date of the crisis as the bottom in the Morgan Stanley Capital International World Index (MSCI), with the worldwide financial crisis lasting until the 5th March 2009 (Frankel et al, 2012: 219). However, the repercussions of the global financial crisis have continued to spread across the Eurozone countries, most notably in Greece, with Portugal, Ireland and Spain also experiencing further macroeconomic chocks from 2008-2013.

Figure 1
Unemployment rates in selected EU countries (FM>=1%) and group average
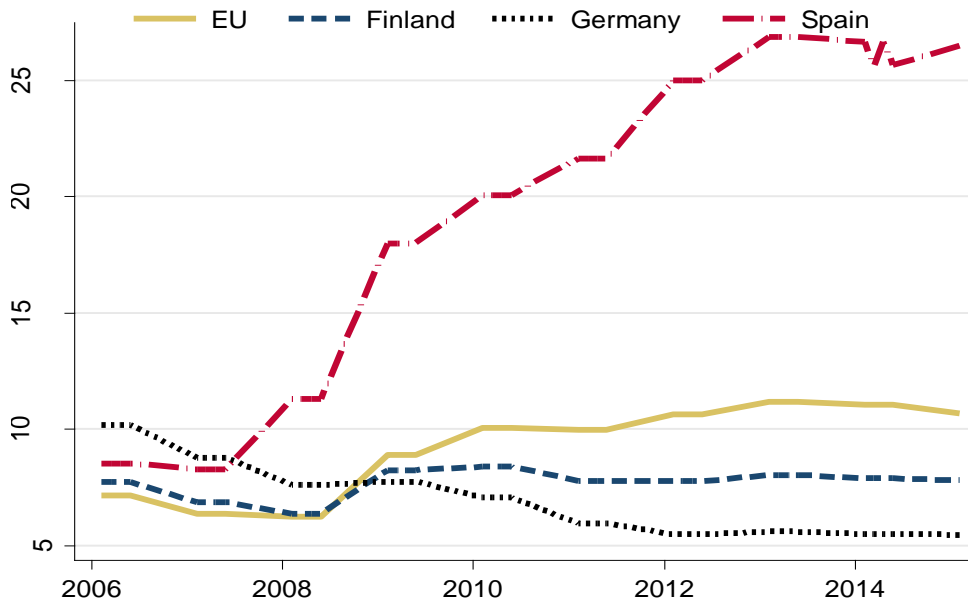
Note: FM= Fiscal Measures
Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook Database (own calculations)

Figure 2
Unemployment rates in selected EU countries (FM<1%) and group average
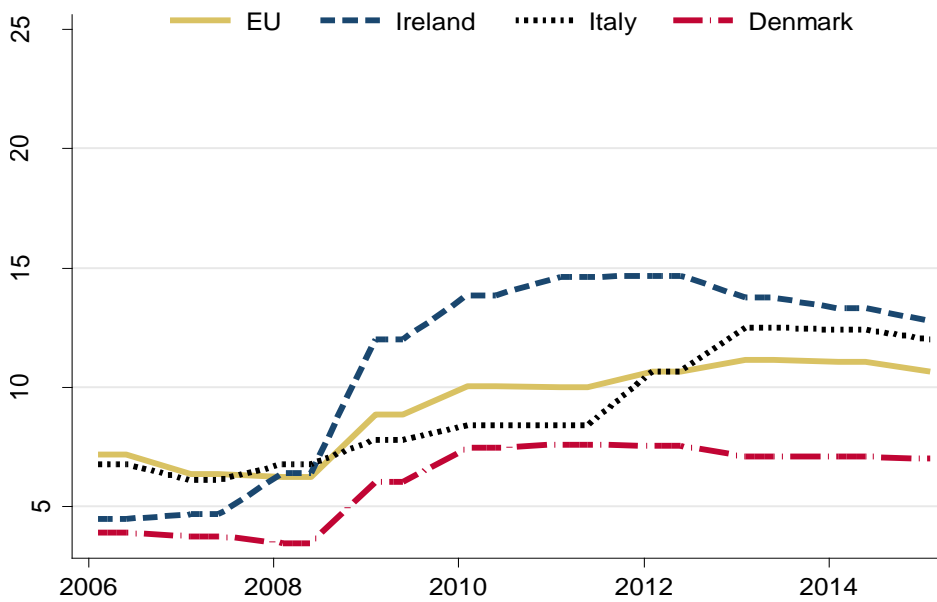
Note: FM= Fiscal Measures
Source: IMF, World Economic Outlook Database (own calculations)

Figure 3 - Equity market volatility and bond spreads
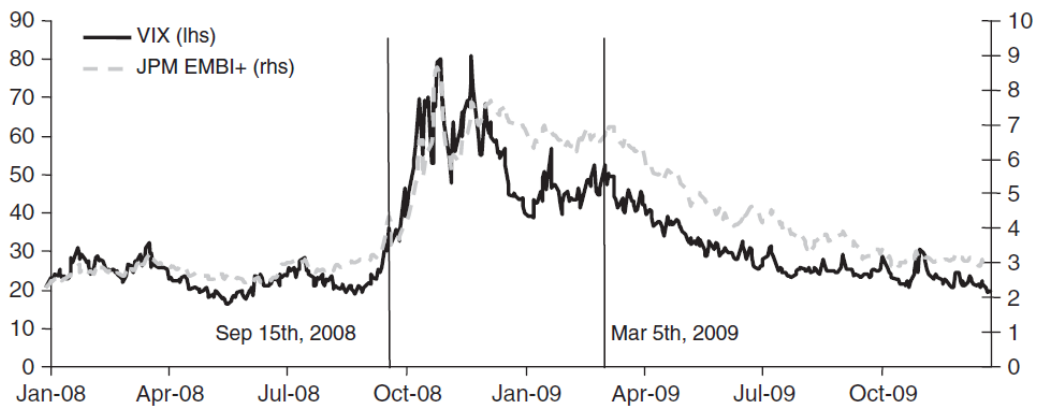
Notes: The two vertical lines indicate the start (15.9.2008) and end (5.3.2009) of the financial crisis.

Source: Frankel and Saravelos 2012, 220

Figure 4
Equity markets and US trade weighted dollar
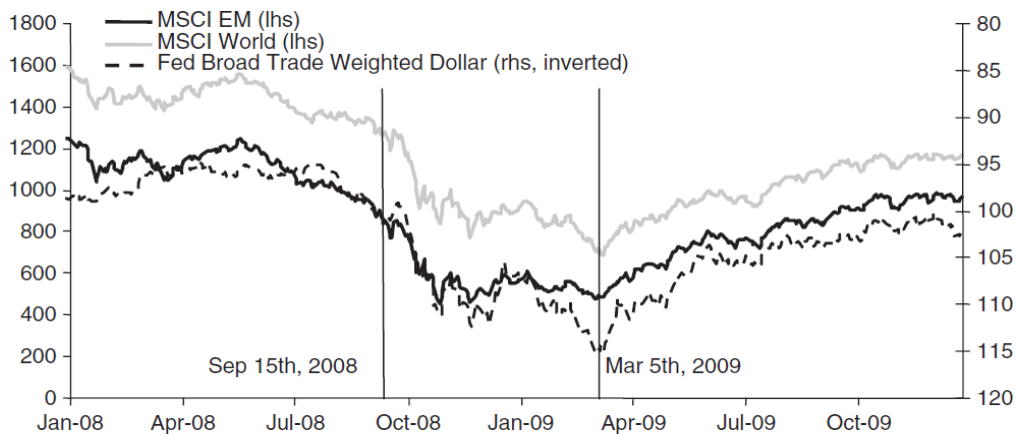
Notes: The two vertical lines indicate the start (15.9.2008) and end (5.3.2009) of the financial crisis.

Source: Frankel and Saravelos 2012, 220

THEORY

Party Competition & Issue Salience

The party competition literature has analyzed the ideological positions of extreme right-wing parties, the convergence between the spatial positions of the mainstream left and right, alongside the proximity of mainstream right competitors. Scholars such as Kitschelt have analyzed the success of a range of party families in Western Europe, through looking at voters (the demand side) and party systems (the supply side.) Kitschelt (1995) investigated the rise of the extreme right during the 1970's and 1980's. This ground breaking work outlined an 'electoral winning formula' for the extreme right and its electoral competitor's populist anti-statist parties to capture electoral support, in espousing an ideology that combined both neo-liberal and pro-market positions alongside authoritarian values in a two-dimensional space that parties and voters are both located on. This winning formula of the extreme right attracted 'a broad constituency of small-business owners, routine white-collar workers, blue-collar workers and inactives' (De Lange, 2007, 416.) In this model, Kitschelt explores two dimensions, the socialist-capitalist and libertarian-authoritarian dimension that is seen to have dominated party competition patterns during this period.

However, the Kitschelt party competition model has been criticized for placing too much emphasis on market liberalism (Mudde, 1999; Eatwell, 2003) and numerous tests have been applied empirically (Abedi, 2002; Iversflaten, 2005; Veugelers, 2001; De Lange, 2007) that appear to falsify this theory. Kitschelt's theory has since been revised, in outlining how extreme right-wing parties now present a more centrist economic position alongside authoritarian policy positions which constitute a revised electoral formula (Kitschelt and McGann, 2005). Recent studies have shown that Kitschelt's theoretical framework needs to be both re-defined and re-conceptualized (De Lange, 2007). Accordingly, where extreme right-wing parties in Western

Europe traditionally campaigned on a neo-liberal and authoritarian programme, the extreme

right now presents a more centrist economic position. De Lange (2007) tests Kitschelt's revised

theoretical model through analyzing the party positions of the French Front National, the

Flemish Vlaams Belang and the Dutch Lijst Pim Fortuyn Party and finds that some extreme

right-wing parties make use of the new electoral formula, but others do not.

Aggregate level issue salience theories in the extreme right-wing literature have also

been explored. There are two central assumptions that form the aggregate level issue salience

theory (Budge, 1982; Budge and Farlie, 1983a; Budge and Farlie, 1983b). (1) Firstly, the theory

assumes that parties compete over issues, in order to acquire and defend their issue

ownership. (2) Secondly, parties compete over new issues and in competition with opponents,

in order to steal issue ownership from their opponents by 'reframing 'issues (Kaufmann, 2004;

Bélanger and Meguid, 2014). The salience that political parties attach to issues is of paramount

importance for democratic politics. On issue ownership, some political parties are positively

associated with different types of issues.

Importance is also placed on directional theories of voting, and the importance of the

cleavage structure means that mainstream parties have tended to dominate electoral

competition 'and have incentives to continue to emphasize such issues, while niche, marginal,

or challenger parties should have incentives to make new and crosscutting issues salient'

(Whitefield and Rohrschneider 2015, P.13). It follows that a core electoral strategy is one of

'selective emphasis', whereby parties maximize and place emphasis on strategic issues that

can win votes come election time and subsequently minimize perceived weak issues (Bélanger

and Meguid, 2014). The literature also outlines the importance of issue blurring in

multidimensional party competition, where parties may disguise their stance on certain issue

dimensions by blurring this issue position as an electoral strategy (Rovny, 2012). Furthermore,

empirical research has outlined how extreme right-wing parties seek to compete on neglected

issues, such as nationalism and anti-immigration, whilst at the same time blurring their positions on established issues in order to attract broader support (Rovny, 2014).

Recent research has shown varying dynamics in regards to party competition and the party positions which extreme right-wing parties adopt during economic downturns. This research suggests that extreme right-wing parties perform better electorally when capitalizing on nationalist sentiment during times of economic crises (Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou, 2013; 2014). A recent study conducted by Tavits and Letki (2014) considers how changes in the social structure have shaped electoral competition in Central-Eastern Europe. These scholars argue that right-wing parties recognize that "growing inequality increases the share of voters who find leftist economic appeals attractive." (Tavits and Letki, 2014; 247) and thus must compensate by distracting voters from their interests towards their value dimension, in the case of Central-Eastern Europe, an explicit appeal to nationalism. Previous literature has also shown that extreme right-wing parties are perceived to lack economic competence in managing the economy amongst voters (Iversflaten, 2005; Mudde, 2007).[3]

Therefore, it follows that it does not make rational sense for extreme right-wing parties to play the economic card and emphasize economic policies as they are not trusted by the majority of the electorate on this policy area (Rovny, 2014).[4] The current political science literature on the extreme right has not resolved the puzzle in regards to the relationship between economic crises and electoral support for the extreme right at the ballot box. In order to disentangle the core mechanisms, this paper specifically investigates the electoral outcomes

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[3] Therefore, the party competition and electoral contest between value- and interest-based competition depends on the timing of substantive changes in the social structure and the strategic choices of parties in electoral competition

[4] Furthermore, it may be the case that left-wing and specifically center left parties are better placed to benefit electorally from economic crises, based on their ideological appeals to policies of redistribution and welfare

of party strategies that extreme right-wing parties and their electoral competitors adopt. This theoretical gap is drawn into five interrelated hypotheses below:

HYPOTHESES

H1: In the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis, electorally successful extreme right-wing parties will perform better when emphasizing socio-cultural issues such as immigration.

H2: In the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis, electorally successful center right parties will perform better when emphasizing socio-cultural issues such as immigration.

H3: In the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis, electorally successful extreme right-wing parties will perform better when emphasizing socio-cultural issues such as nationalism.

H4: In the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis, electorally successful center right parties will perform better when emphasizing socio-cultural issues such as immigration and nationalism.

Furthermore, recent economic voting literature also suggests that incumbent parties will be punished during economic crises and held accountable by voters. (Bartels, 2014; Kriesi, 2014; Alvarez *et al.* 2000; Lewis-Beck 1986). For this reason, a fifth hypothesis is derived that controls for the impact of incumbency, in investigating how incumbents performed during the onset of the economic crisis.

H5: Incumbents will be less successful if national economic performance is decreasing.

'COMPOSITE MODEL OF EXTREME RIGHT-WING VOTING'

The paper develops a composite theoretical model in order to understand how extreme right-wing parties and their electoral competitors seek to manipulate value based positions and issue salience in the form of immigration and nationalism which have electoral implications during periods of economic downturns. This conceptual framework in Figure 5 is based on existing models in the political science literature on extreme right-wing parties. The model integrates the ethnic competition, protest vote, and social disintegration theories together, alongside the conceptual and empirical shortcomings surrounding the economics breeds extremism model. The model in Figure 5 builds on the shortcomings of existing theoretical models and tests the issue salience on immigration and nationalism that extreme right-wing parties and their electoral competitors adopted during the 2008-2013 economic crisis. This paper tests two levels, corresponding to the party competition (meso) and country (macro) level.[5]

Ethnic Competition theories largely revolve around the notion of perceived ethnic threat, involving the stereotyping of ethnic out-groups by a dominant ethnic in-group (Blalock 1967; Tajfel and Turner 1979). The central focus of the 'composite' model is to disentangle the core mechanisms which drive support for the extreme right from a demand and supply side approach. In accordance with existing literature, Western and Central-Eastern European party systems have witnessed a long-term 'disconnect' between mainstream parties and voters in the last decade as seen through widespread declines in partisan dealignment levels (Kitschelt

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[5] The full composite model of extreme right-wing voting contains individual level variables that include the social characteristics and political attitudes held by survey respondents. The full model (Level 1) is outlined and tested in a previous paper by the author.

and Rehm, 2015; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). Furthermore, political parties on the right and extreme right have often presented themselves as alternatives to the status quo. This electoral strategy situates the extreme right as outlets for political dissatisfaction in the form of 'protest' voting or the choice for 'frustrated voters' (Lubbers 2001; Ford and Goodwin 2010; van der Brug et al 2000; van der Brug and Fennema 2003). This form of appeal 'protests' against the political establishment, either domestically or more broadly as opposition to Brussels and supranational institutions.

In the 'Composite' model, extreme right-wing parties are not seen as economically competent and are not trusted in managing the economy (Knigge, 1998; Iversflaten, 2005; Mudde, 2007; Mudde, 2014). Though theoretical frameworks such as the economics breeds extremism theory suggest that declining macroeconomic conditions create a fertile breeding ground for the extreme right, a catalyst is required for this process to take place. This mechanism may be seen in the form of the party strategy and the resulting issue salience that successful extreme right-wing parties and their electoral competitors adopt during times of economic crisis, in tapping into the discontent and fragmented political climate that economic crises often trigger amongst voters. Consequently, successful extreme right-wing parties are likely to differentiate themselves from unsuccessful extreme right-wing parties by shifting dimensions, from the economic to the value dimension, in seeking to tap into people's fears of globalization and the erosion of national sovereignty. In sum, successful extreme right-wing parties will seek to place emphasis and thus issue salience on socio-cultural issues. (Mudde, 2013; 2014). Secondly, successful extreme right-wing parties will emphasize both immigration and nationalism as being threats to national identity, which will be particularly salient during times of economic crisis. Thirdly, it follows that electoral competitors such as center-right parties may seek to ameliorate the threat posed by extreme right-wing parties, by placing

emphasis on socio-cultural issues such as immigration and nationalism. Figure 5 below

provides a simplified model that outlines the key causal linkages of the composite model.

Figure 5 - Composite Model: 'Crisis Rewards Clarity'

Social Context	Group Dynamics (Attitudinal)	Individual Factors (Attitudinal)

Socio-Demographics (1)

Social Class

Age

Sex

Educational Level

Out-Group Antipathy (2)

Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

Perceived Ethnic Threat

Political Dissatisfaction (3)

Euroscepticism

Low Political Efficacy

Authoritarian Beliefs (4)

Authoritarianism

Economic Deprivation (5) → **Economic Competition**

Change in Unemployment

Rising Immigration Levels

Change in Income Inequality

Change in GDP

Western Europe

Central-Eastern Europe

Macroeconomic Context

2008-2013 Economic Crisis

Extreme Right-Wing Voting

Rising Immigration Levels

Party Competition Factors

Issue Salience (Socio- Cultural Issues) (6)

Incumbents

Party Family

Issue Positions

Party Competence

Party Leadership

Salience: Nationalism

Salience: Immigration

Note: The central theoretical mechanisms of this model are placed in parentheses.

15

RESEARCH DESIGN

In the party competition literature, the underlying political space and the patterns of party competition can be analysed according to a variety of methods. Five core methods are commonplace in political science, with (1) Government expenditure flows, (2) Elite studies, (3) Voter Attitudes, (4) Internal analysis of party election programmes, alongside (5) Expert Surveys. This paper utilizes the expert survey method approach for five main reasons. Firstly, expert surveys provide an overall strength of questionnaire design in offering a range of party competition dynamics which can be explored across political systems. Expert surveys are also judged to be authoritative, easily accessible and interpretable. Expert surveys are particularly useful in providing a robust 'way in which to locate parties of the extreme right in the political space of their respective systems'. (Carter, 2005; 111). Internal analysis of party election programmes such as the Comparative Manifesto Research Project are less appropriate as they contain fewer smaller parties which can be analysed.[6] A further advantage of expert surveys are their ability to merge macro level data, whereby meso and macro variables can be included that call for a multilevel framework.

This paper makes use of the Whitefield-Rohrschneider expert survey dataset conducted in 2007-2008 that allows the paper to focus on the onset of the economic crisis and extreme right-wing support. The Whitefield-Rohrschneider expert survey includes the party positions of 190 parties in Europe across 27 European countries (including Moldova and Ukraine) that have been merged with macro level data on country conditions. Parties' electoral performances in the most recent round of Parliamentary elections are matched alongside the Party Position data. Aggregate voting data on parties' electoral performances in parliamentary elections in Europe

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[6]The majority of extreme right-wing parties across Europe fall under this category and are generally underrepresented in the Comparative Manifesto Research (CMR) Project.

were collected from 2005-2012. This has the benefit of (1) investigating the 2008-2013 financial

crisis and in providing (2) a clearer focus on party competition dynamics during this electoral

period.[7] The authors of the 2007/08 expert survey dataset used two core criteria to include

parties and justify their inclusion. Firstly, political parties had to have achieved representation in

a national parliament and secondly had received at least 2% of the national vote in the last

national parliamentary election.   (Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015) Validation analysis

conducted by both authors has also showed that "there is a high correlation between the

ideological placement of parties in expert surveys and the programmatic perceptions of parties

by voters" (Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2015, P.28). Further validation has also showed that

the expert survey produced empirical patterns that matched other data sources (see Dalton et

al, 2011).

In order to test the composite model of extreme right-wing voting, a multilevel dataset

was produced with level 1 units comprising party level data (positional and issue salience) and

level 2 units corresponding to country level data. The dependent variable that forms the

empirical analysis comprises the overall change in the level of party performance by country

and party (i.e. percentage of total votes received) between the two parliamentary elections. It

follows that countries and parties that accumulated more votes over this electoral period would

correspond to a positive change equalling the percentage increase. The change in party

performance is therefore measured through the percent change from one election to the

following election over the period of 2005. The dependent variable therefore provides large

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[7] The countries in the overall sample include: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Ukraine.

variation for measuring party performance across countries. Figure 6 below outlines the

distribution of change in party performance, with 190 parties included.[8]

Figure 6 - Distribution of Change in Party Performance
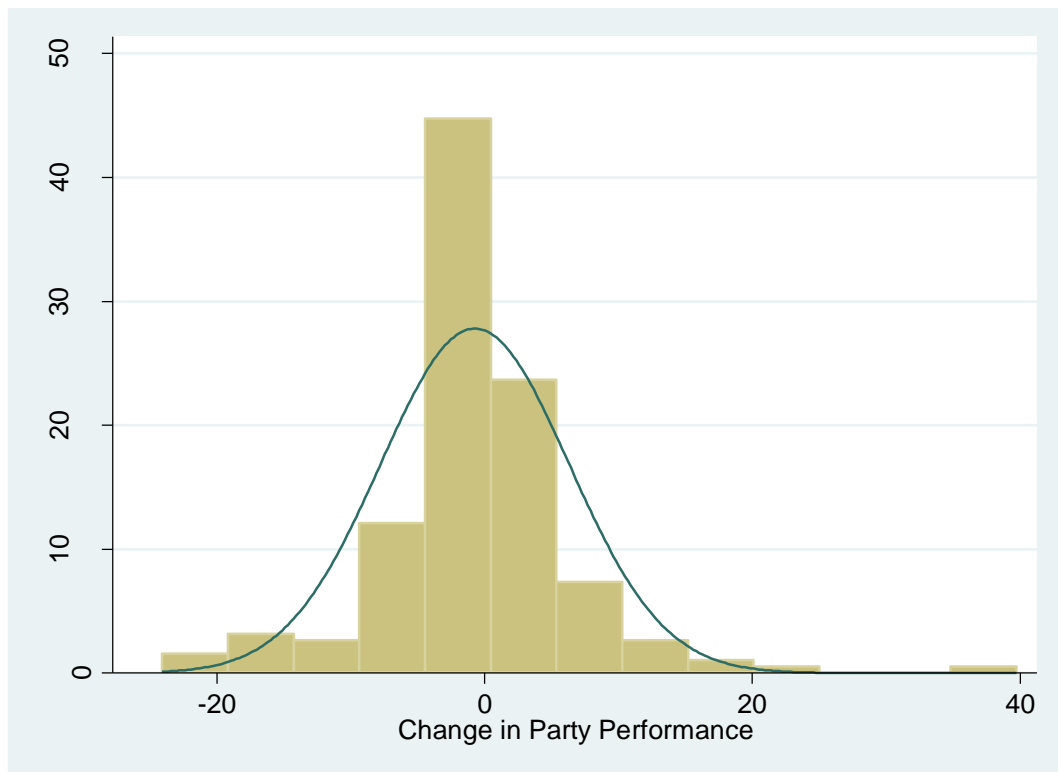
The core independent variables in this paper comprise salience measures relating to

immigration and nationalism and comprise the core socio-cultural issue dimensions in this

paper. The salience of immigration comprised how important migration was as a salience issue

to political parties in their party programmes. The salience of immigration is measured on a 1-7

scale, with a value of 1 corresponding to political parties placing little or no importance on this

issue. A value of 7 corresponded to political parties placing a high issue salience on

immigration. The 'Composite' model is therefore operationalized through a number of

indicators through level 3 (macroeconomic conditions across countries) and level 2 (party

characteristics) and draws on the Rohrschneider-Whitefield expert survey which provides a

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[8] The mean is reported at -0.747 and a standard deviation of 7.04.

range of salience issues of party appeals in the wake of the 2008-2013 economic crisis. Country level data comprised national level income inequality (measured through the change in the Gini coefficient). Additional measures which seek to measure the economic crisis comprise the change in unemployment alongside the change in GDP.[9]

In order to examine the hypotheses outlined above and the different party families, the paper draws on the Whitefield-Rohrschneider expert dataset on Western and Central-Eastern European parties in 2007/2008. Country experts position political parties along the left-right ideological dimension. Political parties are then distinguished between a 'center' and an 'extreme' category. This therefore produces four categories of parties that form the empirical analysis of this paper, corresponding to: extreme left, center left, center right, and extreme right.[10] In order to examine the salience of party appeals of the extreme right and their electoral competitors, the expert survey comprises party positions on a number of dimensions (see Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2012). The dimension of the left-right ideological position of each party enables a mean to be produced for each country. A standardization process then takes place for each countries' sets of political parties, whereby the mean is set to zero and the standard deviation to 1 (see Appendix D). This effectively produces z-scores. For each country, 'left' is defined as including any party with a score of less than zero (to the 'left' of the mean) and 'right' as including any party with a score of more than zero (to the 'right' of the mean). Most significantly, the standardization process results in the creation of a cross-nationally

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[9] Other macroeconomic variables such as inflation, the percentage of gross debt and the number of immigrants were not included, as Unemployment, GDP, and Income Inequality are standard macroeconomic measures used to measure economic crises.

[10] When defining and classifying political parties across Europe, this paper refers to the 'left' and the 'right' positions along the traditional ideological dimension.

specific score that defines 'extreme'. Therefore, any party with a score higher/lower than 1

standard deviation (1 z-score) above or below the mean is defined as 'extreme' right/left.[11]

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

In order to conduct a preliminary investigation of **H2-H4**, correlations and scatterplots

are produced which look at the core salience and positional issues on immigration and

nationalism that political parties adopted in the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis. The

empirical results in Table 1 show the change in party vote by party ideology in the 2008-2013

economic crisis. Extreme left wing parties performed the worst electorally, alongside both

centre left and centre right parties respectively. According to the descriptive statistics in Table 1,

extreme right-wing parties performed better electorally and had a higher aggregate positive

change in their electoral performance. The resulting scatterplots and correlations therefore

show the importance of both the salience of immigration and nationalism to extreme right-wing

parties in Europe. The empirical results suggest that center right parties achieved a higher level

of electoral performance at the aggregate level, in the context of the economic crisis in 2008-

2009 when they emphasized the issue salience of immigration ($r= 0.21$, $p<0.099$, $N=64$).

However, extreme right-wing parties are clearly the primary beneficiaries of emphasizing issue

salience such as immigration in their party appeals ($r=0.46$, $p<0.001$, $N=34$). However, the

salience of immigration is shown to be minimal when taking into account the change in party

performance for the extreme left ($r= 0.051$, $p<0.733$, $N=34$) and center left parties ($r=0.081$,

$p<0.548$, $N=58$).

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[11] The 'Change in Party Performance' data is available from the author on request, alongside the classification of political parties and party families.

Table 1 - Change in Party Vote by Ideological Location

	Extreme Left	Center Left	Center Right	Extreme Right
Ideology				
Mean=	-2.01	-0.05	-1.07	0.39
Standard Deviation=	7.32	7.87	7.02	6.09
N=	34	58	65	34

Table 2 - Correlations in change of Electoral Performance and Core Salience Issues by Party Ideology

Issue Salience		Extreme Left	Center Left	Center Right	Extreme Right	Rightist Parties
Salience of Immigration	*r=*	**0.051**	**0.081**	**0.21**	**0.46**	**0.32**
	sig	0.773	0.548	0.099	0.001	0.002
	N	34	58	64	34	98
Salience of Nationalism	*r*	**0.007**	**0.15**	**0.033**	**0.33**	**0.16**
	sig	*0.070*	*0.275*	*0.801*	*0.06*	*0.12*
	N	*31*	*55*	*59*	*32*	*91*

When examining the salience of nationalism and the change in party performance by party ideology, a diverse set of results are found. Extreme Right-wing parties performed better electorally (r=0.33, p=0.06, N=32) when outlining the importance of nationalism in their party appeals. In contrast though, the salience of nationalism was found to have a weak effect in the change of party performance amongst center right parties (r=0.033, p=0.801, N=59). Extreme left-wing political parties performed the worst when emphasizing the salience of nationalism (r=0.007, p=0.070, N=31). However, center left political parties performed much better electorally when emphasizing the salience of nationalism (r=0.15, p=0.275, N=55). Whilst

these results show that center right and primarily extreme right-wing parties increase their vote share at the aggregate level when they place higher salience to immigration, these empirical results cannot able us to systematically identify the resulting mechanisms in more detail without adopting a multilevel regression analysis.

Figure 7- Electoral Performance and the Salience of Immigration: Center Right Parties

Electoral Performance and Salience of Migration

Electoral Performance and Salience of Nationalism

Electoral Performance and Salience of Migration

Salience of Migration ['Rightist' Parties Combined]
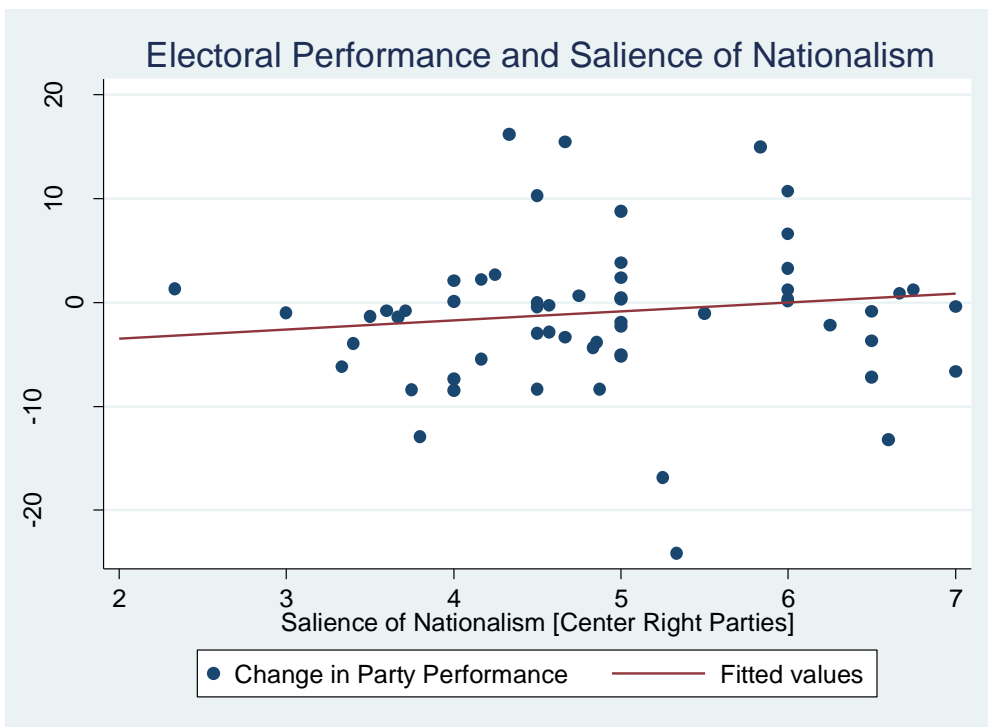
● Change in Party Performance   —— Fitted values
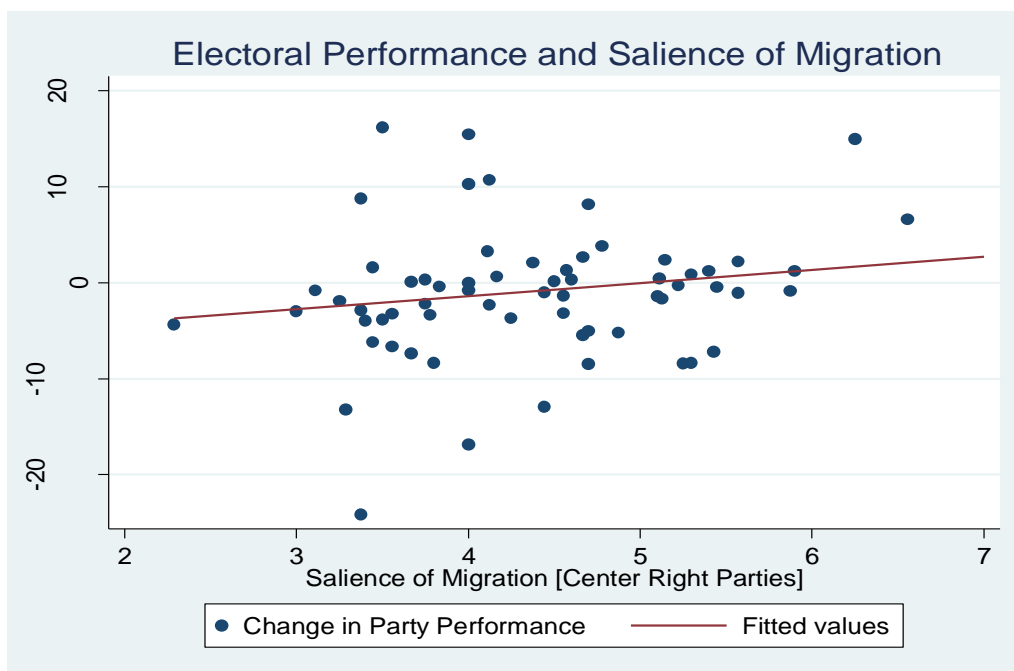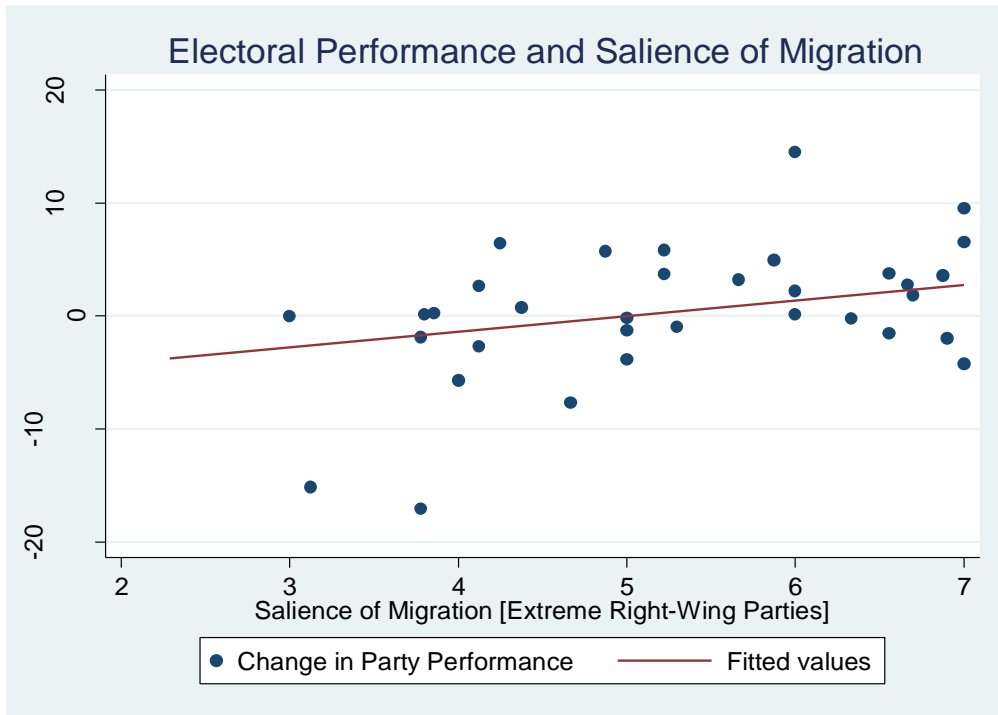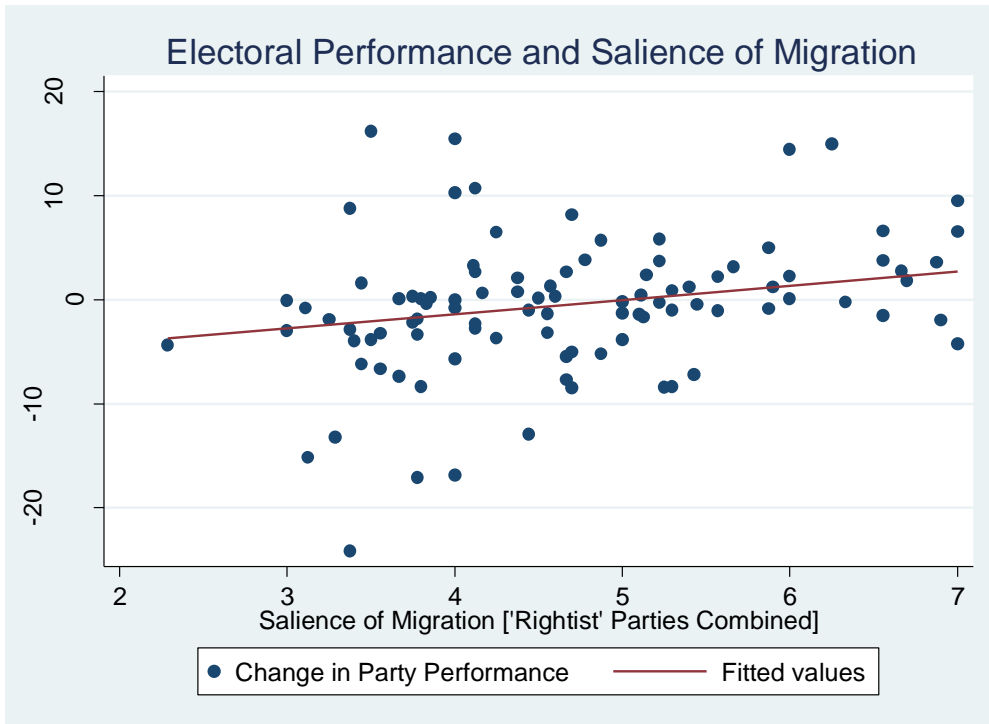
Figure 11 - Electoral Performance and the Salience of Nationalism:
Extreme Right-Wing Parties

Electoral Performance and Salience of Nationalism

Salience of Nationalism [Extreme Right-Wing Parties]

● Change in Party Performance   —— Fitted values

24
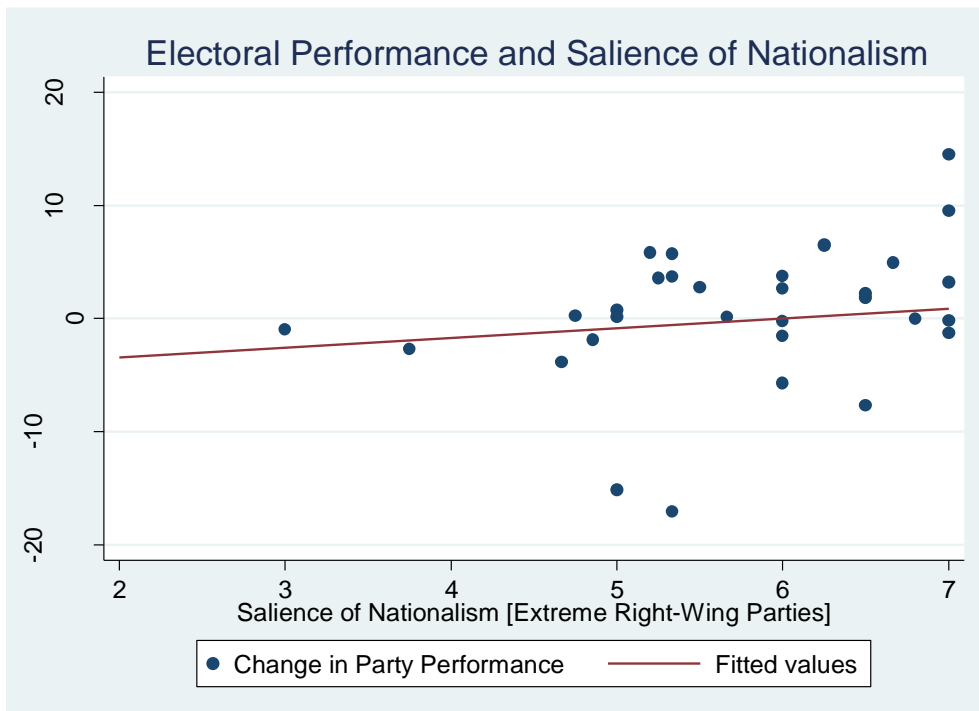
MULTILEVEL MODELS

Model I- Party Performance and the Change in Party Positions across Europe

In order to explore the three hypotheses set out in the paper and due to the nested data that includes both party level and country level data, multilevel regression models with random effects parameters are fitted in order to examine party appeals on both positional and salience issues in the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis. Combining all party families together, the first multilevel model shows the party positions and salience of party appeals in the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis for 176 political parties across 25 countries in Europe. The dependent variable comprises the change in party vote. The core independent variables in the model comprises the positional and high salience issues that political parties adopted. These independent variables include socio-cultural issues, such as the position on immigration, salience towards nationalism, and salience of immigration. A number of statistical controls are included in the regression models. Socio-economic positional issues such as social inequality, welfare, the market and democracy were included, in order to capture substantive differences between socio-cultural and socio-economic issues. As discussed previously, incumbent parties are expected to be punished during economic downturns and is controlled for statistically.

Model I shows the overall party strategies and appeals relating to social inequality, welfare, the market, alongside democracy are weak and non-significant. The salience of nationalism on the change in electoral performance in the onset of the economic crisis has virtually no impact for political parties and is non-significant, thereby suggesting that nationalism did not play an important role in political parties that achieved a higher level of electoral success. The multilevel model shows that incumbents suffered the most during the

2008-2013 economic crisis and is statistically significant at the $p<0.001$ level, thereby confirming **H5.** Counter-intuitive findings are shown. On the one hand, political parties that supported immigration more achieved a marginally higher increase electorally, however the beta coefficient is weak and non-significant. On the other hand, political parties that placed a strong salience on immigration increased their electoral vote markedly and is statistically significant at the $p<0.05$ level. Therefore this result appears to verify **H1**, in showing that parties which placed more emphasis on socio-cultural issues such as immigration were more electorally successful. Nonetheless, on the other dimension of socio-cultural issues, nationalism has a weak substantive effect. The empirical results suggest that incumbent parties were held directly accountable by voters at the ballot box in national parliamentary elections across Europe and this finding verifies previous empirical research in the economic voting literature (Tilley and Hobolt, 2011; Hobolt, Tilley and Banducci, 2012). However, the first multilevel model confirms the need to further explore the positional and salience appeals of political parties further, in seeking to disentangle whether extreme right-wing parties or any one political party in general gained electorally from the onset of the 2008 economic crisis and in further exploring this puzzle.

Table 3 - Multilevel Models showing the Change in Party Performance across Europe

	(MODEL I Party Positions)	(MODEL II Combined)
Salient Party Positions		
Inequality	0.0402	0.195
	(0.04)	(0.15)
Welfare	0.287	0.529
	(0.32)	(0.49)
Market	-0.486	-0.819
	(-0.59)	(-0.74)
Democracy	-0.410	-0.488
	(-0.58)	(-0.57)
Immigration Position	0.0499	0.424
	(0.11)	(0.65)
Salience Nationalism	0.0116	0.173
	(0.02)	(0.28)
Salience Immigration	**1.300***	**1.656***
	(2.49)	(2.02)
Incumbent	**-5.385*****	**-5.631*****
	(-4.74)	(-4.26)
(Ref.Category: Extreme Left)		
Party Ideology		
Center Left		2.940
		(1.69)
Center Right		3.079
		(1.57)
Extreme Right		2.292
		(0.94)
Party-level variables		
Aspirationalism		-1.636
		(-1.16)
Party Competence		-1.039
		(-0.37)
Macro-Political Context		
Closed Lists		-0.115
		(-0.07)
Margin of Majority		0.162
		(0.01)
Gov Fract Index		3.522
		(0.92)
Bicameral Parliament		1.298
		(0.88)
Macro-Economic Context		
Change in Gini		0.230
		(0.55)

```
Change in GDP Growth              0.172
                                 (0.62)

Change in Unemployment            0.263
                                 (1.24)

Eastern Europe                   -0.738
                                (-0.36)
Variance Components
Party Level        -3.665        2.997
                  (-0.80)       (0.21)

Country Level    -23.53***    -23.56***
                  (-5.79)      (-5.60)
------------------------------------------
Level 1 N           177          148
Level 2 N            25           22
------------------------------------------

Note: t-statistics in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001
```

Model II- Combined Party Performance across Europe

The second multilevel model includes additional political and institutional variables that are included to control for variation that is unaccounted for in the first multilevel model. The number of units of analysis in this model has decreased due to additional variables being included, with 148 political parties and level 2 units that comprise 22 countries. However, the empirical results are robust and in line with the methodology in the multilevel modelling literature (Stegmueller, 2013). Empirical evidence confirms H4, that incumbent parties suffered the most economic crisis and were the main losers in being held accountable by voters.

Control Variables

In line with recent work in the political science literature (Powell and Whitten, 1993; Tilley and Hobolt, 2011; Hobolt, Tilley and Banducci, 2012) and in order to control for omitted variable bias, further political and institutional variables are controlled for that examine institutional variation on the change in party support. Building on the institutional and government clarity literature of economic voting, these institutional variables comprise bicameralism (bicameral parliament, No-0, Yes-1), closed lists (0- No, Yes-1) margin of majority (numgov/total seats) and the degree of government fractionalization (government

fractionalization index). In addition to these party level variables, the paper includes party family membership, aspirationalism (measuring citizens' aggregate levels of satisfaction with the 'status quo' by party), and party competence (measuring citizens' aggregate levels of confidence by party) to examine these party-level factors effects on electoral performance.

These variables have a positive effect on the increase in electoral share but have little explanatory power and are non-significant. The salience of immigration was shown to be significant in previous models and is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) but has a decreased magnitude when controlling for additional political and institutional variables. In examining **H2-H4** and the degree to which extreme right-wing parties and their electoral competitors increased their share of the vote in national parliamentary elections. The change in party family variable is included in Model II, with the extreme left used as a reference category.

Consequently, Model II shows that center left and center right parties increased their electoral share of the vote, with the extreme right performing the weakest in the context of the economic crisis. However, Model II shows that no party family gained a substantial electoral increase, with the change in electoral scores for the center left, center right and the extreme right non-significant. Furthermore, in order to empirically measure the 2008-2013 economic crisis, macroeconomic variables corresponding to income inequality, GDP and the change in unemployment are added in the multilevel model, but are shown to have a weak effect on the overall electoral change in party performance.[12] Therefore, empirical results show that the change in party performance is better predicted in Western Europe, with parties performing better over the electoral period than in Eastern Europe. The empirical evidence thus lends little support to **H2-H4**, merely showing that incumbents performed the worst electorally in national

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[12] The change in migration levels at the macro level was excluded from the analysis due to problems with missing data.

parliamentary elections, with the biggest winning party strategy comprising the salience of immigration to party appeals.

Models III and IV- Change in Party Performance for Extreme Right-Wing Parties

Model III comprises a more parsimonious model, with 176 level 1 units and 25 level 2 units (countries). Model III verifies the previous empirical multilevel model in showing the strength of immigration salience ($p<0.05$) in increasing the electoral performance for political parties, with incumbent governing parties losing out considerably in national parliamentary elections across the 25 European countries.

In order to examine **H2-H4** further, statistical interactions are modelled in two multilevel models. The core findings in Model IV suggest that 'rightist' parties, in particular extreme right-wing parties have capitalized on the issue salience of immigration and played the immigration card during the onset of the economic crisis, in order to increase their overall vote share. This evidence suggests that extreme right-wing parties framed the economic crisis in socio-cultural terms, in appealing to the threat of immigration and linking the Eurozone crisis to their core ideological features of nativism, authoritarianism and populism. Furthermore, the statistical interaction between the center right and immigration salience score is statistically significant at the $p<0.01$ level, whilst the corresponding interaction for the extreme right is statistically significant at the $p<0.05$ level. When analysing the results closer, both center and extreme right-wing parties performed considerably better when emphasizing the issue salience of immigration than extreme left and center left parties do (see Halikiopolou et al, 2013). Center right parties increased their vote marginally more when emphasizing the issue salience of immigration, in comparison to extreme right-wing parties and empirical evidence is found for both **H3 and H4.**

Furthermore, negative findings are found for the salience of nationalism for both extreme right-wing and center right parties. This suggests that the salience of nationalism is not as electorally important to both party families as originally hypothesized. In the third multilevel model, incumbent parties are again the worst beneficiaries during the onset of the economic crisis and suggests that voters assigned blame to incumbents during the onset of the economic crisis. The incumbency result appears to conform to the classic economic voting model of attributing economic blame to incumbent governments and holding them directly accountable at the ballot box (Bartels, 2014; Kriesi, 2014; Alvarez *et al.* 2000; Lewis-Beck 1986.)

Therefore, the multilevel regression models show that center and extreme right-wing parties achieve higher levels of electoral success when they emphasized the salience of immigration. This therefore provides further evidence that 'rightist' parties achieved a higher level of electoral success in national parliamentary elections when higher emphasis was placed on the salience of immigration in their party appeals during the 2008-2013 economic crisis. Conceivably, center right parties may be responding to the electoral threat of extreme right-wing parties in times of economic crisis, by shifting further to the 'right' and adapting their party strategy on socio-cultural issues such as immigration and nationalism, in order to mimic the party strategy of the extreme right.[13] However, due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, this empirical paper is unable to directly measure the role of party adaptation and the impact this has on party competition between extreme right-wing and center right parties. Both findings for center right and extreme right-wing parties are statistically significant at the $p<0.05$ level when

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[13] One notable example of this party adaption is the current political landscape in Hungary. The incumbent government Fidesz has repositioned itself to the far right of the political spectrum and taken on a number of policy initiatives that the extreme right-wing party Jobbik has outlined. Arguably, Fidesz's shift to the far right on socio-cultural issues such as nationalism and immigration has seen the center party reposition itself to the Hungarian electorate, in order to portray the party outside the post-1989 system and at the same time seek to ameliorate the electoral threat posed by Jobbik.

interacted alongside the salience of immigration and this provides further evidence in outlining

the strength of socio-cultural issues to party appeals for 'rightist' parties.

<u>Table 4- Multilevel Model showing the Change in Party Performance
for Center Right and Extreme Right-Wing Parties</u>

```
----------------------------------------------------------------
                    MODEL III     MODEL IV (Interactions)
                    (Combined)

----------------------------------------------------------------

Salient Party
Positions

Inequality          -0.156            -0.406
                    (-0.15)           (-0.37)

Welfare              0.594             0.579
                    (0.63)            (0.62)

Market              -1.122            -1.257
                    (-1.27)           (-1.41)

Democracy           -0.602            -0.665
                    (-0.85)           (-0.93)

Immigration
Position             0.311             0.760
                    (0.57)            (1.24)

Salience
Nationalism          0.0631
                    (0.13)

Salience
Immigration          1.528*
                    (2.43)

Party-level variables

Incumbent           -5.602***         -5.741***
                    (-4.93)           (-5.08)

(Ref.Category: Extreme Left)

Party Ideology

Center Left          1.940
                    (1.29)

Center Right         2.373
                    (1.42)

Extreme Right        1.591
                    (0.78)

Party Ideology * Issue Salience

Extreme Left *
Immigration Salience                   0.540
                                      (0.50)

Center Left *
Immigration Salience                   0.888
                                      (1.02)

Center Right *
Immigration Salience                   2.403*
                                      (2.49)
```

```
Extreme Right *
Immigration Salience                  2.546*
                                      (2.27)

Extreme Left *
Nationalism Salience                  0.440
                                      (0.46)

Center Left *
Nationalism Salience                  0.547
                                      (0.84)

Center Right *
Nationalism Salience                 -0.595
                                     (-0.76)

Extreme Right *
Nationalism Salience                 -0.786
                                     (-0.81)
```

Macro-Economic Context

```
Change in Gini         0.408          0.382
                      (1.65)         (1.56)

Change in GDP
Growth                 0.146          0.124
                      (0.95)         (0.82)

Change in
Unemployment           0.260          0.278
                      (1.78)         (1.90)

Eastern Europe         0.852          1.292
                      (0.66)         (0.98)
```

Variance Components

```
Party Level           -6.025         -5.032
                     (-1.23)        (-1.04)
Country Level        -23.40***      -23.38***
                     (-5.94)        (-5.88)
-------------------------------------------
Level 1 N              176            176
Level 2 N               25             25
-------------------------------------------
Note: t-statistics in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001
```

Model V- Statistical Interactions

Model V shows the impact of macroeconomic conditions in the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis in their effect on the change in party performance for right and left-wing parties alike is weak. Multilevel models with random slopes are produced. During rising periods of income inequality, evidence suggests that center left parties are conceivably better positioned to benefit according to this model. Further empirical evidence for the change in unemployment and GDP growth is shown, with parties on the center left appearing to be better

positioned to handle the economic crisis, rather than parties on the extreme right and this is replicated in previous research (Knigge, 1998; Iversflaten, 2005; Mudde, 2007).

Therefore, it appears that the received wisdom that economic crises drive a systematic shift in electoral support for the extreme right does not hold up under empirical scrutiny. This empirical relationship and mechanisms involved are much more complex. Recent election results and large electoral gains for Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece also show how parties on the extreme left may be perceived as more economically competent than their center left ideological counterparts during periods of economic strife in both countries amongst voters.[14] Recent empirical research has highlighted how extreme right-wing parties seek to compete on and emphasize neglected, secondary issues such as immigration and nationalism. This same research also points to the importance of issue blurring, in showing how extreme right-wing parties deliberately obfuscate or blur established issues in order to attract a broader range of support (Rovny, 2013). This same dual mechanism may be operating in this paper, with successful extreme right-wing parties framing the economic crisis in socio-cultural terms, but blurring established issues such as the economy. This paper has not directly tested this, but future research should seek to build on this empirical finding. Therefore a similar mechanism of issue clarity appears to be at work in this paper, with electorally successful center and extreme right-wing parties performing better when making salient issues on socio-cultural issues such as immigration, irrespective of national context.

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[14] Conceivably, these substantial electoral increases may be a result of these parties' anti-neo liberal platforms amid austerity measures in the Eurozone that resonate well with the electorate, or alternatively may stem from protest voting.

TABLE 5: Multilevel Model showing the Change in Party Performance for Political Parties

```
-----------------------------------------------------------
                          MODEL V (Cross-level Interactions)
-----------------------------------------------------------
```

Salient Party Positions

	MODEL V (Cross-level Interactions)
Inequality	-0.750
	(-0.72)
Welfare	0.842
	(0.93)
Market	-1.162
	(-1.34)
Democracy	-0.103
	(-0.15)
Immigration Position	0.774
	(1.30)

Party-level variables

Incumbent	**-6.110***
	(-5.53)

Cross-Level Interactions

Extreme Left * Immigration Salience	0.594
	(0.57)
Center Left * Immigration Salience	0.314
	(0.37)
Center Right * Immigration Salience	**2.550**
	(2.73)
Extreme Right * Immigration Salience	**2.577***
	(2.34)
Extreme Left * Nationalism Salience	0.411
	(0.44)
Center Left * Nationalism Salience	0.562
	(0.89)
Center Right * Nationalism Salience	-0.409
	(-0.53)
Extreme Right * Nationalism Salience	-0.552
	(-0.56)
Extreme Left * Unemployment	-0.0845

```
                                    (-0.29)

Center Left *
Unemployment          0.561*
                      (2.35)

Center Right *
Unemployment          0.365
                      (1.62)

Extreme Right *
Unemployment          0.231
                      (0.71)

Extreme Left *
Change in Gini        -0.625
                      (-1.12)

Center Left *
Change in Gini        1.671***
                      (3.73)

Center Right *
Change in Gini        0.0555
                      (0.15)


Extreme Right *
Change in Gini        0.232
                      (0.34)

Extreme Left *
Change in GDP
Growth                -0.0887
                      (-0.27)

Center Left *
Change in GDP
Growth                -0.367
                      (-1.37)

Center Right *
Change in GDP
Growth                0.469*
                      (2.14)

Extreme Right *
Change in GDP
Growth                0.481
                      (1.14)

Eastern Europe        1.279
                      (1.01)
```

Variance Components

```
Party Level           -6.545
                      (-1.39)
Country Level         -23.48***
                      (-5.57)
--------------------------
Level 1 N             176
Level 2 N              25
--------------------------
```
Note: t-statistics in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This paper investigated how extreme right-wing parties responded to the 2008-2013 economic and financial crisis, specifically examining which successful party strategies they adopted. An composite model of extreme right-wing voting was formulated that integrates a number of existing theoretical frameworks from the political science literature. Empirical evidence suggests that extreme right-wing parties capitalized on the issue salience of immigration and used the immigration card as a party strategy to increase their electoral vote share during the economic crisis. Furthermore, it appears that extreme right-wing parties framed the economic crisis in socio-cultural terms, in appealing to the threat of immigration and linking the economic crisis to their core ideological features of nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde, 2014).

The paper finds preliminary evidence for evolving party competition dynamics between extreme right-wing and center right parties, specifically in how both party families benefit electorally from emphasizing immigration salience in the context of the 2008-2013 economic crisis. Incumbent governing parties suffered the most from the global financial crisis and their electoral vote share decreased substantially, with voters assigning blame to these parties for declining macroeconomic conditions. These findings have implications for the trajectory of contemporary liberal democracy in Europe, with the electoral threat posed by extreme right-wing parties, in emphasising the socio-cultural dimension on the immigration issue which acts as a successful party strategy during times of economic crisis. Whilst the paper has shown that extreme right-wing parties alongside center right parties capitalized on the issue salience of immigration during the economic crisis, the paper was unable to show whether a similar party strategy was adopted by extreme right-wing parties during economic good times. The paper was also unable to identify the most successful extreme right-wing parties as this cross-

sectional analysis is currently unable to provide the necessary test of this. Future research

should aim to build on these limitations, in analyzing the party strategies that electorally

successful center right and extreme right-wing parties adopted in national parliamentary

elections before (2004-2007) and during (2008-2013) the economic crisis through a qualitative

case study analysis.

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MEASUREMENT APPENDIX A. Variables and Operationalization

Dependent variable:
Change in the percent of party vote: the difference in percentage of votes between the two elections years (see country and parties).

Independent variable:

Positional Issue:

- Inequality (1 unjustified/undesirable - 7 justified/desirable)
- Welfare (1 universal - 7 means-tested)
- Distribution: (1 pro-distribution - 7 anti-distribution)
- State vs Market Econ: (1 Against Markets - 7 Pro Market)
- Democracy (1 Anti-Democracy - 7 Pro-Democracy)
- Nationalism: (1 Nationalist - 7 Internationalist)
- Immigration: (1 Oppose – 7 Support)

Salience Issue:
- Inequality (1 Not important - 7 Very important)
- Welfare (1 Not important - 7 Very important)
- Distribution: (1 Not important - 7 Very important)
- State vs Market Econ: (1 Not important - 7 Very important)
- Democracy (1 Not important - 7 Very important)
- Nationalism: (1 Not important - 7 Very important)
- Immigration (1 Not important - 7 Very important)

Aspirationalism: from the European Values Survey 2008 (V8): "Taking all things together how happy are you?" response categories: very happy, quite happy, not very happy, and not at all happy. Reverse coded to make aggregate intuitive.

Party Competence: from the European Values Survey 2008 (V221): "How much confidence in: political parties?" response categories: a great deal, quite a lot, not very much, and none at all. Reverse coded to make aggregate intuitive.

Incumbent: 1 if party is incumbent, 0 otherwise

Party Ideology: Extreme Left, Centre Left, Centre Right, Extreme Right

Eastern Europe Dummy: 1= Eastern European country, 0=Western European country

Institutional clarity:
Bicameral parliament: 0 No, 1 Yes
Closed party lists: 0 No 1 Yes

Governmental clarity:
Margin of Majority: Fraction of seats held by government (numgov/total seats)
Government Fractionalization Index

APPENDIX B. Classification of Parties and Countries:

Country/Electoral Years/Party

Austria: 2006-2008
Alliance for the Future of Austria
Freedom Party of Austria
The Greens
Austrian People's Party
Social Democratic Party of Austria

Belgium: 2007-2010
Christian-Democratic & Flemish
New Flemish Alliance
Humanist Democratic Centre
Ecologists
National Front
The Flemish Greens
List Dedecker
Reform Movement
Socialist Party
Socialist Party. Different
Flemish Interest
Flemish Liberals and Democrats

Bulgaria: 2005-2009
Bulgarian Socialist Party
Bulgarian People's Union
Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria
Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria
Movement for Rights and Freedoms
National Movement for Stability and Progress
National Union Attack
Union of Democratic Forces

Czech Republic: 2006-2010
Christian and Democratic Union
Czech Social Democratic Party
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
Civic Democratic Party
Green Party

Denmark: 2007-2011
Danish People's Party
Unity List - The Red-Greens
Conservative People's Party

New/Liberal Alliance
Radical Liberals
Social Democracy
Socialist People's Party
Denmark's Liberal Party

Estonia: 2007-2011
Estonian Centre Party
Estonian Greens
Pro Patria and Res Publica Union
Estonian Reform Party
Estonian People's Union
Social Democratic Party

Finland: 2007-2011
Finnish Christian Democrats
Finnish Centre
National Coalition Party
True Finns
Finnish Social Democratic Party
Swedish People's Party in Finland
Left Alliance
Green Alliance

France: 2007-2012
Democratic Movement
National Front
Movement for France
New Center
French Communist Party
Left Radical Party
Socialist Party
Union for a Popular Movement
The Greens

Germany: 2005-2009
The Left (Party of Democratic Socialism, PDS)
Christian Democracy Union
Christian Social Union
Free Democratic Party
Alliance 90/The Greens
Social Democratic Party of Germany

Greece: 2007-2009
Communist Party of Greece
Popular Orthodox Rally
New Democracy
Panhellenic Socialist Movement
Coalition of the Left, the Movements and the Ecology

Hungary: 2006-2010
Fidesz - Hungarian Civic Union
Christian Democratic People's Party
Hungarian Democratic Forum
Hungarian Justice and Life Party
Hungarian Socialist Party
Union of Free Democrats

Ireland: 2007-2011
Soldiers of Destiny
Family of the Irish
Green Party
Labour Party
Progressive Democrats
We Ourselves
Communist

Italy: 2006-2008
Italy of Values
Left Democrats
Party of Italian Communists
National Alliance/PdL
Forza Italia/PdL
Leaga Nord
Italian Democratic Socialists
Union of Christian and Centre Democrats
Communist Refoundation Party
Green Federation

Latvia: 2006-2010
Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party
Fatherland and Freedom
New Era
Latvia's First Party / Latvia's Way
Union of Greens and Peasants
For Human Rights in United Latvia
Harmony Centre
People's Party

Lithuania: 2004-2008
Fatherland Union
Order and Justice - Liberal Democrats
Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Alliance
Labour Party
Liberal and Centre Union
Liberals' Movement of the Republic of Lithuania
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party/New Union - Social Liberals
Lithuanian Peasant Popular Union
Civic Democratic Party

Moldova: 2005-2009

Party Alliance Our Moldova
Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova
Democratic Party of Moldova
Christian Democratic People's Party
Soc-Lib/Dem Party

Netherlands: 2006-2010
Democrats 66
Labour Party
Party for the Animals
Christian Democratic Appeal
Christian Union
Green Left
Freedom Party
Reformed Political Party
Socialist Party
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy

Poland: 2007-2011
Left and Democrats
League of Polish Families
Law and Justice
Civic Platform
Polish People's Party
Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland

Portugal: 2005-2009
Democratic Social Centre
Left Bloc
Portuguese Communist Party
Ecological Party The Greens
Socialist Party
Social Democratic Party

Romania: 2004-2008
Democratic Party
Liberal Democratic Party
New Generation Party
National Liberal Party
Christian Democratic National Peasant's Party
Great Romania Party
Social Democratic Party
Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania

Slovakia: 2006-2010
Direction - Social Democracy
People's Party - Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
Christian Democratic Movement
Party of the Hungarian Coalition
Slovak Democratic and Christian Union
Slovak National Party

Slovenia: 2004-2008
Democratic Pensioners' Party of Slovenia
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia
New Slovenia - Christian People's Party
Social Democrats
Slovenian Democratic Party
Slovenian People's Party
Slovenian National Party

Spain: 2004-2008
Convergence and Union of Catalonia
Basque National Party
Navarre Yes
Galician Nationalist Bloc
Canarian Coalition
Aragonese Union
Basque Solidarity
Republican Left of Catalonia
United Left
People's Party
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party

Sweden: 2006-2010
Sweden Democrats
Centre Party
Liberal People's Party
Christian Democrats
Moderate Rally Party
Environment Party The Greens
Social Democratic Workers' Party
Left Party

UK: 2005-2010
Conservative Party
Labour Party
Liberal Democrats
Party of Wales
Scottish National Party

Ukraine: 2007-2012
Bloc Yulia Tymoshenko
Communist Party of Ukraine
People's Bloc Lytvyn
People's Self-Defense/People's Union Our Ukraine
Party of Regions
Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine
Green Party
Socialist Party of Ukraine